

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
Strategic Agricultural Initiative/Food Quality Protection Act
Grant Program: FY 2008 Request for Proposals**

Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”), Region 9

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2008 Strategic Agricultural Initiative/Food Quality Protection Act Grant Program

Announcement Type: Initial Solicitation

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-CED1-08-003

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 66.716

OVERVIEW

EPA Region 9 is soliciting proposals to carry out the Food Quality Protection Act and to support efforts by the agricultural community to “transition” away from high-risk pesticides to lower risk pesticides and sustainable practices in food production. The statutory authority for this program is Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (“FIFRA”), 7 U.S.C. §136r. The program supports grants for education, extension and demonstration projects for FQPA transition and reduced risk practices for pest management in agriculture. Proposals for demonstration projects must demonstrate applications, technologies, methods or approaches that are new, innovative or experimental. A demonstration project that is carried out through a routine or established practice is not eligible for funding.

In 2008, EPA Region 9 anticipates awarding approximately **\$400,000** to eligible applicants. EPA Region 9 anticipates awarding approximately 3 to 5 grants ranging in size from approximately \$50,000 to a maximum of \$100,000.

There is no matching requirement under this program.

States, U.S. territories or possessions, federally recognized Indian Tribal governments and intertribal consortia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public and private non-profit institutions, and individuals are eligible to apply for funding. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1955 are not eligible to apply.

Contact:

Cindy Wire
415-947-4242
wire.cindy@epa.gov

IMPORTANT DATES

March 14, 2008: Proposals must be postmarked or electronically submitted via Grants.gov by 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time

April 25, 2008: Funding decisions are announced

May 23, 2008: Full application and work plan due to EPA

Sept 30, 2008: Awards made

The above dates (other than the March 14, 2008 proposal submission date) are anticipated dates and may be subject to change. Late proposals will not be considered.

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Strategic Agricultural Initiative/Food Quality Protection Act
Grant Program: FY 2008 Request for Proposals
Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R9-CED1-08-003

Full Text Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Background and Program Description

The Food Quality Protection Act (“FQPA”), passed by Congress in 1996, establishes health based standards for pesticide residues in raw and processed food. It is intended to protect the public from exposure to pesticides and to create an environment favorable to the development and adoption of lower risk, effective crop protection tools for U.S. agriculture. EPA established the national Strategic Agriculture Initiative (“SAI”) Program, which is administered regionally, to carry out the FQPA by providing economic assistance for growers interested in adopting more environmentally sound practices. For more background information on FQPA, visit the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/laws/fqpa/index.htm>.

1. *Purpose and Scope* - The purpose of the Strategic Agricultural Initiative (“SAI”) FQPA Grant Program is to carry out FQPA and support “transition” efforts by growers to more environmentally sound pest management practices. The program supports grants for educational outreach, studies, investigations, and demonstration projects for FQPA transition and reduced risk practices for pest management in agriculture. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that: include a “whole systems” approach by integrating pest, soil, water and crop management practices; address an array of commodities; or that focus on “sustainable” agriculture; and incorporate conservation planning. “Sustainable” agriculture refers to farming practices that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible. Successful applicants should also have an outreach and extension component to their program. (See Section V. B. Selection Criteria)

2. *Goals and Objectives* - The goals of the national Strategic Agricultural Initiative FQPA grant program are to:

- Utilize demonstration projects, and outreach and education projects to increase the adoption of reduced risk/integrated pest management (IPM) practices that provide alternatives to the use of highly toxic pesticides and/or pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions.
- Encourage partnerships between producers, commodity groups, scientists, extension, local/state/federal government agencies, and other stakeholders to demonstrate, promote, and utilize reduced risk/IPM practices in the field.
- Actively engage scientists, producers, industry, and local/state/federal partners in the specifics of meeting the objectives of FQPA.

- Quantitatively measure and document the effects of using the reduced risk/IPM programs on the environment, human health and community.
- Facilitate a sustainable whole farm systems approach that utilizes conservation planning and reduced risk/IPM practices.
- Demonstrate region-specific pest management practices and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses which may be cancelled under FQPA.

3. *Regional Priorities for 2008* - For 2008, EPA Region 9 is interested in projects that help growers transition away from high risk pesticides to lower risk alternatives. This includes projects that address regional pest issues, and/or air and water quality concerns. Examples include:

- Reduction in the use of organophosphates including azinphos-methyl, Phosmet, Diazinon and chlorpyrifos; carbamates; or synthetic pyrethroid insecticides through transition to lower risk alternatives.
- Transition from high risk pesticides to lower risk practices while also addressing other environmental challenges such as: 1) finding alternatives to soil fumigants and pesticides identified as “Volatile Organic Compounds” contributors, and 2) employing pest management practices that also support water quality and food safety efforts.

Applicants should include economic viability of IPM adoption and supporting data when available. Other challenges to the adoption of sustainable practices should be noted.

B. FQPA/SAI Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan

Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan/GPRA Architecture. The assistance agreements will support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems; Objective 4.1 - Chemical, Organism and Pesticide Risks; Sub-objective 4.1.5: Realize the Value from Pesticide Availability. Through 2011, ensure the public health and socio –economic benefits of pesticide availability and use. To see EPA’s 2006-2011 Strategic Plan: www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm

C. Environmental Results

Pursuant to EPA Order 5700.7, “*Environmental Results under EPA Assistance Agreements*,” EPA requires that all grant recipients adequately address environmental outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes differ both in their nature, and in how they are measured.

1. *Outcomes.* The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outcomes from the projects funded under this solicitation may include but are not limited to the following: 1) increase the number of growers using reduced risk/IPM tools and techniques; 2) measure quantitative and qualitative reduction in the use of higher risk pesticides or pesticides in general; and 3) support partnerships between crop producers, EPA, other federal/state/local agencies, and other interested stakeholders to implement reduced risk/IPM programs and to leverage funds from other sources to increase the scope of the FQPA/SAI program.

2. *Outputs.* The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work products related to an environmental goal and objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outputs from the projects funded under this solicitation may include but are not limited to the following: 1) educational and outreach materials for growers; 2) conservation plans for growers that include reduced risk pest management; 3) conferences, seminars, and on-site field training on pest management techniques; 4) partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced risk/IPM programs for crop producers; 5) acres impacted by the project under management that include pesticide risk reduction practices; and 6) percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients.

II. Award Information

A. Amount of Funding Available

In 2008, EPA Region 9 anticipates awarding approximately \$400,000 in grants to eligible applicants. EPA Region 9 anticipates awarding approximately 3 to 5 grants ranging in size from approximately \$50,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. Proposals in which the applicant is requesting funds in excess of \$100,000 will not be reviewed. If costs are incurred before the award, they are incurred at the grantee’s own risk.

EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement without further competition (after the original award selections are made) if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions. The additional selections must be made in accordance with the terms of this announcement and EPA policy.

Funding for these projects is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds and the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria in this announcement. In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process. Award of funding through this year’s competition is not a guarantee of future funding.

Proposals to supplement existing projects are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement or make fewer awards than anticipated.

B. Start Date/Project Duration

All projects should have an anticipated start date of **October 1, 2008**. Proposed project periods may be up to two (2) years.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

States, U.S. territories or possessions, federally recognized Indian Tribal governments and intertribal consortia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public and private non-profit institutions, and individuals are eligible to apply for funding. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1955 are not eligible to apply.

B. Matching funds

There is no match requirement for this program. However, please note that leveraged resources will be considered as an evaluation criterion during the selection process (See Section V).

C. Threshold Eligibility

In order to be eligible for funding consideration under this announcement, proposals must meet all of the following conditions. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will not be considered for funding and will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Proposals cannot exceed \$100,000. Proposals that request more than \$100,000 will not be considered for funding.
2. Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
3. Proposals must be postmarked or electronically submitted via Grants.gov by 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on March 14, 2008. Proposals postmarked or submitted through grants.gov after this time will be returned to the sender without further consideration. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Cindy Wire (wire.cindy@epa.gov or 415-947-4242) as soon as possible after the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

4. All projects must be carried out within one or more of the states of EPA Region 9 (Hawaii, Nevada, Arizona, and California), Tribal Nations in Region 9, or the U.S. Pacific Islands.
5. The SAI/ FQPA grant program is intended to support demonstration projects, education and outreach projects, studies, and investigations. Proposals seeking funding for basic research are not eligible for funding. However, proposals may include a *component for applied on farm research*, as long as they also have *demonstration, education and/or outreach activities*.
6. Proposals for demonstration projects must involve applications, technologies, methods or approaches that are new, innovative or experimental. A demonstration project that is carried out through a routine or established practice is not eligible for funding.
7. Proposals from different principal investigators within an organization will be accepted. However, principal investigators may not submit more than one proposal.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Format and Content of Proposals

Project proposals must be double spaced, typed in 12 point or larger print with a minimum of one inch horizontal and vertical margins. Pages must be numbered in order starting with the cover page and continuing through the document. Project proposals (including all of the elements described in 1 below) cannot exceed 20 pages double spaced. Letters of support are not included in this page limit. If a single spaced proposal is submitted, it will only be reviewed up to the equivalent of 20 pages double spaced page limit for project proposals.

Proposals must address each of the Evaluation Criteria in Section V of this announcement and follow the format and content outlined below.

1. Required Documents

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted under this announcement:

- a. **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):** Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. A SF-424 form can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/application.htm>
- b. **Project Proposal:** The document, prepared as described below, should be readable in PDF, MS Word for Windows and consolidated into a single file.

2. Project Proposal Format

a. Cover Page:

The cover page should list the following information on your organization's letterhead:

Project Title:

Project Coordinator:

Organization Name and Address:

Telephone No.:

Fax No.:

Email Address:

Project Duration (including Starting Date and Ending Date):

First Year Funding Request:

Second Year Funding Request, if applicable:

Total Funding Request (for the entire project):

Please indicate if this proposal is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project.

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please provide the following:

EPA Assistance Number: _____

Budget Period of Project: _____

b. Executive Summary:

The Executive Summary should be a stand alone document (recommended **not to exceed one (1) page**), containing the specifics of what is proposed and how you expect to accomplish the project goals. This summary should identify the **measurable environmental results** you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits. (See Section I. for more information about environmental results)

c. Table of Contents:

Self explanatory.

d. Proposal Narrative:

Applicants must make sure that the proposal narrative includes the information below and addresses the selection criteria in Section V of this announcement.

Part 1: Project Title. Self explanatory.

Part 2: Objectives. Include a numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives. In most cases, each objective can be stated in a single sentence.

Part 3: Justification. For each objective listed in Part II above, discuss the potential outcome in terms of environmental, human health, pesticide risk and/or use reduction or pollution prevention. If appropriate, the target pest(s) and crop(s) should be explicitly stated. This section should be numbered with a justification corresponding to each objective.

Part 4: Literature Review. Briefly describe relevant information currently available. This should also include information on projects currently in progress that are relevant to or provide the basis for either the experiment design or the validation of a new approach to pest management.

Part 5: Approach and Methods. Describe in detail how the program will be carried out. Describe how the system or approach will support the program goals. Include a well conceived work plan that is realistic and appropriate to achieving the identified objectives. This should

include a brief background on the main issues or challenges, specific objectives, main activities and expected outcomes and deliverables. Include the project area.

Part 6: Performance Measures and Expected Outputs and Outcomes. Please state how you will evaluate the success of the program in terms of measurable environmental results. The work plan should include **performance measures** that demonstrate progress or environmental benefits of the project. To do this, you will need to select two or three measures from the SAI Toolbox which can be found at <http://sai.ipm.gov> (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures). If you cannot access these measures on the web, please call Cindy Wire at (415) 947-4242 for a hard copy of the measures.

If you choose to use unique performance measures other than those listed in the Toolbox, they must be clearly described and submitted as part of the proposal. If your project is selected for funding, measures included in your proposal may be subject to negotiation.

Include a clear explanation of your plan and the methods (both quantitative and qualitative) that will be used for tracking and measuring environmental results. Measures of success should be linked to reduction of pesticide use/risks, implementation of alternative agricultural practices, and/or similar impacts.

In addition, all **projects must include the following reporting elements:**

1. Number of acres likely to be impacted by the project.
2. Current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index. See <http://sai.ipm.gov> (SAI Grant Applicants). If you cannot access the web, please call Cindy Wire at (415) 947-4242 for a hard copy.
3. Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected of the targeted high risk pesticide active ingredients and/or pesticide products.

Part 7: Literature Cited. List cited key literature references alphabetically by author.

Part 8: Timetable. A timetable that includes what will be accomplished under each of the objectives during the project and when completion of each objective is anticipated.

Part 9: Past Performance/Programmatic Capability: Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements), and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In addition, for these agreements describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage them and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under the agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

Applicants must also provide information on their (i) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project and (iv) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

In evaluating applicants under past performance and reporting factors in Section V. A., EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g. to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for those elements under Section V. A.

Part 10: Project Budget Accompanied by Budget Narrative (budget narrative recommended not to exceed one page). Provide a budget matrix. Identify how the requested funds are to be used and also identify how other funding will be used in this project. Please include an indirect cost rate if applicable. Please submit a detailed budget with narrative, explaining the need for funding under each of the appropriate budget categories. List the anticipated amount of funding and associated staff needed to achieve the project objectives. Include the requested federal and any non-federal cost share in these estimates. Link each task or activity from the project work plan to the associated resources that are needed to accomplish the activity. Under travel, include the travel location(s), estimated number of trips, estimated total mileage, and number of nights lodging required throughout the entire project period. Describe how leveraged resources will be obtained (if applicable) and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project. Include enough detail for EPA to determine if the costs are eligible, reasonable and allowable. For more information, see <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

Part 11: Letters of Support. Applicants are encouraged to provide letters of support to demonstrate established partnerships and support for the project. See evaluation factor #4 in section V. Letters of support do not count towards the proposal page limit.

B. Submission Method

Please note that applicants may choose to apply in one of two ways: *hard copy submission* or via *Grants.gov*. Proposals must be postmarked or submitted via Grants.gov no later than **March 14,**

2008, 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time. Proposals submitted via email (email submission is not the same as submitting through Grants.gov) or by fax will not be considered.

Please select only one option for submitting your proposal package.

OPTION 1: DIRECTIONS FOR HARD COPY SUBMISSION

Submit one hard copy, and one copy on a 3.5" disk, "IBM" compatible, readable in MS Word or on a CD ROM.

Hard copy proposals and disks should be sent to:

**Cindy Wire, Agriculture Program
Communities and Ecosystems Division/ CED-1
US EPA – Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105**

OPTION 2: DIRECTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION via WWW. GRANTS.GOV

ATTENTION: Microsoft Windows Vista and Word 2007 users;

Please note that Grants.gov has issues with supporting the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista. Grants.gov will be reviewing this new product to determine if it can be supported in the future. In addition, the newest version of Microsoft Word (Word 2007) saves documents with the extension .DOCX. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension .DOCX. When submitting Microsoft word documents as attachments on Grants.gov, please use the document format in Microsoft Word with the file extension "DOC". If you have questions regarding this matter, please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at: support@grants.gov or call: 1-800-518-4726.

Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically must do so through the Grants.gov web site. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download a proposal package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required proposal package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency. Pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the proposal package.

If you wish to apply electronically via Grants.gov, the electronic submission of your proposal package must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process for this grant program, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Apply for Grants” tab on the left of the page. Then click on “Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions” to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the proposal package and instructions for applying under this announcement using Grants.gov (https://apply.grants.gov/forms_apps_idx.html). You may retrieve the proposal package and instructions by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R9-CED1-08-003 or the CFDA number 66.716, in the space provided. Then complete and submit the package as indicated. You may also be able to access the proposal package by clicking on the “Application” button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically. Proposals must be submitted via the Grants.gov system no later than March 14, 2008, 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions:

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted under this announcement:

- I. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- II. Project Proposal-as described in Section IV A of the announcement.

Documents I and II above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For document I, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document II, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your project proposal as described in Section IV of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word, PDF file. When you are ready to attach it to the proposal, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your proposal (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “Add Optional Project

Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY08 – Assoc Prog Supp – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY 08 Assoc Prog Supp – Back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY08 Assoc Prog Supp – 2nd Submission.”

Once your proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the “Application Filing Name” box, your AOR should enter your organization’s name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY08), and the grant category (e.g., Assoc Prog Supp). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the proposal package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at: <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission.

Electronic Submission. All proposal packages submitted via grants.gov must be received by <http://www.grants.gov/Apply> no later than **5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time March 14, 2008**. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic time stamp is generated within the system when the proposal is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their proposal.

Applicants should print this receipt and save it, along with facsimile receipts for information provided by facsimile, as proof of timely submission. When EPA successfully retrieves the proposal from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt to the e-mail address of the AOR. Proof of Timely submission shall be the date and time that Grants.gov receives your proposal.

Proposals received by Grants.gov, after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by EPA. EPA suggests that applicants submit their proposals during the operating hours of the Grants.gov Support Desk, so that if there are questions concerning transmission, operators will be available to walk you through the process. Submitting your proposal during the Support Desk hours will also ensure that you have sufficient time for the proposal to complete its transmission prior to the proposal deadline.

Applicants using dial-up connections should be aware that transmission should take some time before Grants.gov receives it. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission message. The Grants.gov Support desk reports that some applicants abort the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process.

Please be patient and give the system time to process the proposal package. Uploading and transmitting many files particularly electronic forms with associated XML schemas will take some time to be processed.

C. Confidential Business Information

It is recommended that confidential business information (“CBI”) **not** be included in your proposal/application. However, if CBI is included in your proposal/application, it will be handled in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2.203. Applicants must clearly indicate which portion(s) of their proposal/application they are claiming as CBI. EPA will evaluate such claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant which is otherwise required by 40 CFR Part 2.204(2) prior to disclosure.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants (except for Indian Tribes and Tribal Consortia) must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372 or Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

E. Pre-proposal/Application Communications and Assistance

EPA Region 9 will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. However, in accordance with EPA’s Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals/applications.

F. DUNS

All applicants applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Data Numbering System (DUNS) number. Applicants that do not already have a DUNS number may find instructions for obtaining one at the following website: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. A DUNS number may also be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711.

G. Conference and Workshops

If a conference or workshop is an element of the project, the applicant will be required to answer the following questions: Who is initiating the conference/workshop/meeting? How will it be advertised? Whose logo will be on the agenda and materials? What is the percentage of participants, i.e. federal, state, local or public? Will the grant recipient prepare the proceedings and disseminate the information back to the targeted community? Will program income be generated from this event?

H. Contracts and Subawards

a. Can funding be used for the applicant to make subawards, acquire contract services, or fund partnerships?

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the recipient even if other eligible applicants are named as partners or co-applicants or members of a coalition or consortium. The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance, which includes using subawards or subgrants to fund partnerships, provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Applicants must compete contracts for services and products, including consultant contracts, and conduct cost and price analyses, to the extent required by the procurement provisions of the regulations at 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify subawardees/subgrantees and/or contractors (including consultants) in their proposal/application. However, if they do, the fact that an applicant selected for award has named a specific subawardee/subgrantee, contractor, or consultant in the proposal/application EPA selects for funding does not relieve the applicant of its obligations to comply with subaward/subgrant and/or competitive procurement requirements as appropriate. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal solely based on the firm's role in preparing the proposal/application.

Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products from for-profit organizations to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient

assistance under Subpart B Section .210 of OMB Circular A-133 , and the definitions of subaward at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or subgrant at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions. Applicants acquiring commercial goods or services must comply with the competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36 and cannot use a subaward/subgrant as the funding mechanism.

b. How will an applicant's proposed subawardees/subgrantees and contractors be considered during the evaluation process described in Section V of the announcement?

Section V of the announcement describes the evaluation criteria and evaluation process that will be used by EPA to make selections under this announcement. During this evaluation, except for those criteria that relate to the applicant's own qualifications, past performance, and reporting history, the review panel will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of:

- (i) an applicant's named subawardees/subgrantees identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in the proposal/application that if it receives an award that the subaward/subgrant will be properly awarded consistent with the applicable regulations in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. For example, applicants must not use subawards/subgrants to obtain commercial services or products from for profit firms or individual consultants.
- (ii) an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted. EPA may not accept sole source justifications for contracts for services or products that are otherwise readily available in the commercial marketplace.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

V. Application Review Information

A. Proposal Review

All proposals will be reviewed for threshold eligibility purposes (See Section III) by the Region 9 Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator. Each proposal that meets threshold eligibility requirements will then be evaluated by a panel of EPA staff based on the criteria set forth below. In your proposal, please make sure that you address each criterion.

B. Selection Criteria (Total 100 points)

1. Extent to which the proposed project focuses on sustainable agriculture and uses conservation planning and a whole systems approach. Proposals will be evaluated based on: (i) The project's approach to methods for grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices, along with applied research and extension program components, and; (ii) The extent that a "whole systems" approach to pest management is encouraged. The project should strive to integrate pest, soil, crop, and water management practices. **(10 points)**
2. Importance of project in relation to FQPA. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent that they address critical pest management issues relative to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and are consistent with the goals of the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative. (See Section I for goals) Projects must focus on actual results, getting information and agricultural practices into the hands of growers who actually use them to shift away from FQPA-targeted pesticides to other methods of pest management. **(10 points)**
3. Commodity and region-wide significance and degree of transferability to other areas. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent they address agricultural commodity pest problems, and discuss and explain the importance of the project and the commodity. In addition, the proposal should address how the agricultural practice and reduced-risk tools could be adapted to other locations with similar cropping systems. **(10 points)**
4. Extent to which the project has on-farm demonstration with active roles for multiple grower participation. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent of their partnerships and the participation of growers as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, extension officers, pest control advisors, crop consultants other non-profit organizations, and other partners is encouraged. Letters of support from collaborators, indicating their contributions to the project, may be provided for this factor. **(10 points)**
5. Extent to which the project has clearly stated objectives. Proposals will be evaluated based on their clarity and ability to explain the project objectives and the degree to which the proposed project will: (i) Reduce or eliminate the use of highly toxic pesticides; and (ii) Increase farmers' adoption of reduced risk alternatives and/or sustainable integrated pest or crop management methods. **(10 points)**
6. Extent to which the project has environmental measurement/outputs and outcomes. Projects will be evaluated on their plan for tracking and measuring the applicant's progress towards achieving the expected project environmental results. Proposals will be scored on the performance measures selected and the supporting data that will be used to track the selected performance measures as described in Section IV.

In addition, **all projects must include the following** reporting elements:

- i. Number of acres likely to be impacted by the project;
- ii. Current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index <http://sai.ipm.gov> (SAI Grant Applicants);

- iii. Percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected of the targeted high risk pesticide active ingredients and/or pesticide products. **(15 Points)**
7. Outreach/Use of extension to enhance the likelihood of grower adoption. Proposals will be evaluated to the extent that there are clear plans for extension; outreach or communications that will likely lead to effective learning and adoption of new practices, and how the long term, sustainable adoption will be measured. **(10 points)**
8. Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's programmatic capability to perform the proposed project based on the applicants:
- (i) past performance in successfully completing federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a federal contract) within the last three years; **(2 points)**
 - (ii) history of meeting reporting requirements on federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a federal contract) within the last three years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; **(2 points)**
 - (iii) past performance in documenting and/or reporting on its progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally funded assistance agreements (an assistance agreement is a grant or cooperative agreement and not a federal contract) performed within the last three years and if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not); **(2 points)**
 - (iv) organizational experience and ability to plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the project; and **(2 points)**
 - (v) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. **(7 points)**

In evaluating applicants under this factor, EPA will consider information provided by the applicant and may also consider information from other sources including prior grantors and agency files. Applicants with no relevant or available past performance and/or reporting history (items i, ii, and iii above) will receive a neutral score for those elements of this factor.

9. Extent to which the project utilizes additional funding sources and partnerships. Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. **(10 points)**

Final funding decisions will be made by the EPA Region 9 FQPA Selection Committee based on the results of the proposal evaluation. In addition, in making the final funding decisions, the Region 9 FQPA Selection Committee may also consider program balance, available funds, and geographic diversity.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Decisions and Formal Application Process

Once proposals have been reviewed, evaluated and ranked, applicants will be notified via U.S. Mail regarding the outcome of the competition. The notification **is not** an authorization to begin performance on the selected project(s).

In order to receive EPA funds, selected applicants must submit a complete grant application which includes a detailed work plan and budget approved by EPA. A notification containing financial and administrative, and general information on Federal grants will be mailed to the selected applicants. Blank application forms may also be obtained at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region09/funding/applying.html>

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The award and administration of these grants will be governed by the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements set forth at 40 CFR Part 30 or 31. In addition, the provision in 40 CFR Part 32 governing government-wide debarment and suspension, and the provisions in 40 CFR Part 34 regarding restrictions on lobbying applies.

Once a proposal is selected, the recipient may be required to submit before award, in addition to a full application, a copy of its written procurement procedures developed in accordance with 40 CFR 30.40 – 30.48 or 40 CFR 31.36, as applicable, for review.

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circulars. Copies of the circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>. In accordance with the EPA policy and the OMB circular, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising, or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. Cost rates will not increase the \$100,000 maximum funding amount.

In certain circumstances costs incurred prior to the grant award may be eligible for reimbursement. However, this does not include any costs associated with responding to this solicitation or in finalizing the application package. If costs are incurred before the award, they are incurred at the applicant's or grantee's own risk.

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

In accordance with 40 CFR 30.54 and 31.45, projects that include the generation or use of environmental data are required to submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). This includes efficacy and performance data, surveys and similar results. The award recipient must develop and implement quality assurance and quality control procedures, specifications and

documentation that are sufficient to produce data of adequate quality to meet project objectives. The QAPP is the document that provides comprehensive details about the quality assurance/quality control requirements and technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that project objectives are met. The QAPP should be prepared in accordance with EPA QA/R-5: EPA Requirements for Quality Assurance Project Plans. The QAPP must be submitted to the EPA Project Officer at least 30 days prior to the initiation of data collection or data compilation. Requirements for QAPP's can found at http://www.epa.gov/quality1/qa_docs.html.

Indirect Cost Rates

If indirect costs are budgeted in the assistance application and the non-profit organization or educational institute does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it agrees to prepare and submit its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with the appropriate Federal cost principle, 2 CFR Part 230 (formerly OMB Circular A-122), "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" or 2 CFR Parts 215 and 220 (formerly OMB Circular A-21), "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions" within ninety (90) from the effective date of the award for this assistance agreement.

If a local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with 2 CFR Part 225 (formerly OMB Circular A-87), "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments." The local government recipient whose cognizant Federal agency has been designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal for approval to its cognizant Federal agency within six (6) months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant Federal agency has not been identified by the OMB, the local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period.

Studies Using Human Subjects

A grant recipient must agree to meet all EPA requirements for studies using human subjects prior to implementing any work with these subjects. These requirements are given in 40 C.F.R. 26. For observational studies involving children and/or pregnant women, please refer to Subparts B & D of 40 C.F.R. 26. No work involving human subjects, including recruiting, may be initiated before the EPA has received a copy of the applicant's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approval of the project and the EPA has also provided approval. Where human subjects are involved in the research, the recipient must provide evidence of subsequent IRB reviews, including amendments or minor changes of protocol, as part of annual reports. Until further notice, EPA will not consider funding for research that involves intentional dosing human toxicity studies with pesticides.

C. Reporting

The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit a progress report six months after the beginning of the project, and then additional progress reports annually throughout the duration of the project. Reports should include a description of project activities including accomplishments, successes and lessons learned along with any problems and/or delays. Environmental outcomes should be indicated in relation to the approved schedule and milestones. Annual Financial Status

Reports (FSR's) will also be required. A final project report is also required 90 days following the end of the project period according to the same format. All reports can be submitted either electronically or by hard paper copy.

D. Dispute Resolution Process

Grant competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the contact listed in Section VII.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Strategic Agricultural Initiative/Food Quality Protection Act Grant Program: FY 2008 Request for Proposals, please contact:

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